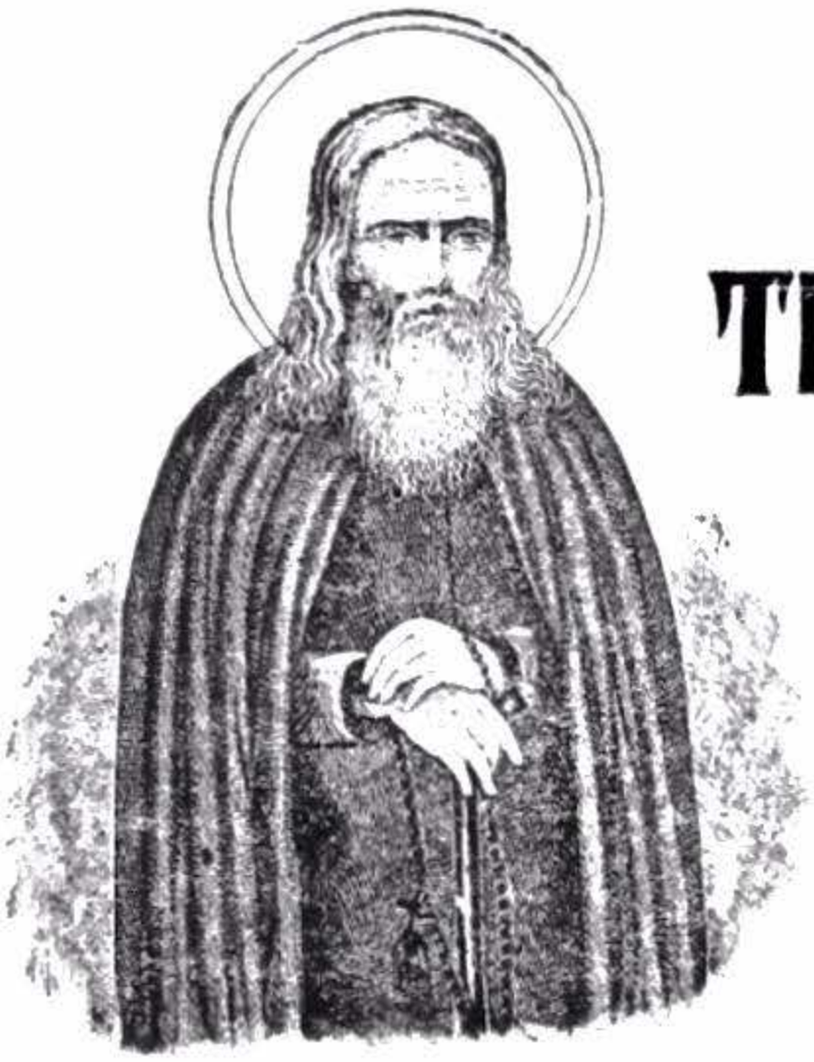
THE ORTHODOX WORD

July - August
1973

Ninety Cents
No. 51

Blessed Paisius Velichkovsky at
DRAGOMIRNA



THE ORTHODOX WORD

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OF THE BROTHERHOOD OF
SAINT HERMAN OF ALASKA

Established with the blessing of His Eminence the late *John (Maximovitch)*, Archbishop of Western America and San Francisco. Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia

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COVER: Dragomirna Monastery: a detail of an early 19th-century painting presently in Roumania.

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Metropolitan Anastassy

1873-1973

(August 6)

IN THE PERSON of the Most Blessed Metropolitan Anastassy the last representative of the hierarchy of pre-Revolutionary Russia departed from us. As young as he was then, he was one of the leading candidates for Patriarch at the last Local Council of the Russian Church (1917-18), thus clearly showing the respect and authority he enjoyed. He lived for twenty years, eight of them as bishop, in Moscow, and his spiritual character was formed under the influence of the great holy places of Moscow as well as the great hierarch, Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow, an authentic ascetic in the Orthodox tradition and a giant of thought and word, many of whose features became typical also of Metropolitan Anastassy. When the fatal year of 1917 came, and many even of the clergy were seized by the revolutionary fever, Metropolitan Anastassy immediately discerned the anti-Christian character of the Revolution and stood firmly in defense of faith and the Church of Christ.

Already an outstanding hierarch in Russia, during the years of the Russian Diaspora he occupied a leading position in Church affairs. In 1923 he represented the Russian Church at the so-called "Pan-Orthodox Congress" convened by Patriarch Meletios of Constantinople in order to "reform" Orthodoxy, and here he courageously raised his voice against the senseless innovations that were proposed then. In 1936 he was the one logical choice of the hierarchs abroad to succeed Metropolitan Anthony as Chief Hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad, and he occupied this position worthily for 28 years, giving an example of wise church governance. After the Second World War he was responsible for restoring the unity of the scattered parts of the Russian Church Abroad and standing firm together with them in the face of intense Soviet propaganda and pressure which threatened the liquidation of a free Russian Church altogether. After entrusting the governance of the Church Abroad to his successor, Metropolitan Philaret, and experiencing the great joy of the canonization of St. John of Kronstadt, he reposed in the Lord on May 9|22, 1965, leaving behind his written testament to his fellow hierarchs, exhorting them to preserve purity of faith and to have no communion with the puppet Patriarchate of Moscow, but to leave the judgment of its hierarchs to the future Council of the free Russian Church.

Archbishop Averky

(*Summarized from* Orthodox Russia, 1973, *no.* 15)

MARTYROLOGY OF
THE COMMUNIST YOKE

The Young Father Vladimir

A SAINT OF CATACOMB HOLY RUSSIA

*A priceless fragment from the life of much-suffering Russia, this account sheds a ray of light on the hidden treasures of Holy Russia today. From the memoirs of Natalia Vladimirovna Urusova, a member of the Catacomb Church in Russia before the Second World War, and herself the mother of three martyr sons.**

FROM MY CHILDHOOD I had a friend who was two years older than I. She was married two years before me. In the first year of their marriage a son was born to them, and he was baptized with the name of Vladimir. From his very birth the child struck everyone by his large and beautiful dark brown eyes which had, as it were, a sorrowful expression. The child was extraordinarily quiet. In the second year of their marriage a second boy was born to them who was called Boris. This child was the complete opposite of his older brother. From the first day of his appearance in the world he struck everyone by his extraordinarily noisy and lively character. I loved both of these boys and often would come to baby-sit and spend time with them. Vladimir grew up and remained exactly the same as he was born. He never wanted to play with other children. He would sit down and remain alone quietly in a corner. This disturbed his parents. "What is this little head thinking about all the time?" the parents asked me. The father and mother were very religious and raised their children in this spirit. Little Volodya was eager to go to church and often went with his nurse when his parents for some reason could not go to the Divine service. The second boy, Boris, on the contrary, was lazy about going to church.

When it came time for Vladimir to go to school, his mother said to me: "I do not know how Vovochka will be able to study. It seems that he is not only incapable, but there's also some kind of abnormality about him. He is not interested in anything except church; he is always quiet and deep in thought about something not in accordance to his age." The parents were mistaken; they did not understand their own child. He went through all the classes to the finish as first in his class, astonishing his teachers by his mind and talents.

* *Orthodox Russia,* 1957, no. 5, pp. 8-10.

FATHER VLADIMIR WITH THE ICON
OF THE SAVIOUR NOT-MADE-WITH-HANDS

And when after finishing high school he declared that he desired to enter the theological academy for further education, his parents here also did not understand the path which he had chosen and which was clearly indicated to him by God Himself. They insisted that first he should complete the four-year course of the university in whatever department he himself would choose; and if after this his intention should remain unchanging, then they would give their blessing for him to enter the academy. "You are still very young," they said to him; "obey your parents." And he submissively obeyed them.

The four-year course of the law department he finished in three years, as was allowed at that time, and then he entered the academy. After finishing the academy he was very quickly ordained deacon, and in 1916 he was ordained priest. He did not wish to become married, but since according to Church

rules he did not have the right to remain unmarried as a priest — then behold what a great sign of God saved him and was fulfilled in him.

His family was friendly with another very pious family. They had one young daughter who was dying of advanced tuberculosis. The physicians indicated that she would live no longer than a month. She knew of Vladimir's unvanquishable desire to become a priest and of his sorrow in connection with the necessity of entering into marriage. And so she offered herself as a holy sacrifice, knowing that she was dying. She agreed to enter into marriage with Vladimir, even though she could hardly stand on her feet, so that he, being left a widower, would have the right to be a priest. The parents did not hinder this holy deed which she undertook before her death. After the wedding they led her home from church; she no longer got up from bed, and in two weeks she peacefully died.

Father Vladimir, marked from his birth by God, went on his chosen path. In 1924 he and his parents were sent from Moscow to the city of Tver in so-called "voluntary exile." Despite his youth, Father Vladimir was given great veneration and love by the parishioners of the church where he celebrated Divine services. Neither he nor his parents had the right to leave the city, and they were considered as being under the observation of the GPU.

The sermons of Father Vladimir were distinguished by their complete fearlessness. He called on everyone to submit to no kind of church interference by the Bolsheviks. He would not listen to any kind of warnings to be careful. After one extraordinary sermon he went to bid farewell to his parents, having been secretly warned by someone that he would be arrested at night. Insistently, before his final farewell on earth, he begged his father and mother under no conditions, even at the moment of death, to call a priest who had entered into contact with the Soviet regime [i.e., had remained under Metropolitan Sergius after his "Declaration" of 1927], even though one would have to die without confession and communion of the Holy Mysteries. In the same night he was led away and executed in the Lyubanka prison in Moscow.

After this until 1932, not living in Moscow, I did not know anything about this family with which we had been such friends. In 1935 I went to visit my mother, who was quite old and lived in Moscow. Walking along the street alone, I saw Boris coming to meet me. We immediately recognized each other, even though we had not seen each other for a long time. With burning eyes he began to tell me about himself.

We came to the first boulevard and sat down on a bench. And this is what he told me about the evident miracle of God's great mercy which had been performed upon him:

"When the unsettled times before the Revolution began, I immediately gave in to the propaganda. I joined the Young Communists immediately after it was organized, and soon, to the great sorrow and terror of my parents, I became also a member of the Atheist League. My brother Vladimir tried to return me to God, entreating me to come to my senses, and probably both during his life and after his murder he prayed much for the salvation of my soul. But this did not cause me to waver. On the contrary, after he was shot I soon became the head of the Atheist League in one remote city where I went voluntarily, after marrying a girl who was also in the Young Communists and who ridiculed faith in God. Her parents, just like mine, were very religious. Both hers and mine declared to us that if we did not go through the Church rite of matrimony they would renounce us. Despite the extreme difference in our views, I very much loved my father and mother. Seeing their inexpressible sorrow, I persuaded my bride to fulfill the demand of our parents and, while in our souls we mocked the sacrament of marriage, nonetheless we were secretly married — secretly, because otherwise we both would have been shot. Before the wedding the mother of my wife blessed her with a large icon of the Saviour Not-made-with-hands and said: 'Give me your word that you will not throw it out; even if you do not need it now, still do not destroy it.' Truly, we did not need this icon, and it lay in a trunk in our shed together with useless things.

"A year later a son was born to us. We both wished to have a child and were very happy at his birth, but the child was born sick and weak, with a tubercular spine. We had managed to preserve something from the previous pre-revolutionary wealth, and my own salary was sufficient so that without sparing money we could ask the best physicians to come. They all said that in the best possible case, if the boy would be always lying down on his back in a plaster cast, he could live to be six years old, but no more. And so we went away to a remote place, trusting in a better climate. There I became the head of the Atheist League and in every way possible persecuted the Church.

"The child was five years old and his health was getting worse all the time. Then we were not living in the city itself but in a healthful place in the country. The rumor came to us that a famous professor of children's diseases had been sent to this city for resettlement. One had to go 20 miles from our village to the nearest station, and the train went only once in a day. The boy was very sick, and I decided to go and bring the professor to us. When I came to the station, the train left before my very eyes. What should I do? Should I wait a whole day while my wife was at home and the child might die suddenly without me? I thought and thought — but what could be done? I

turned back. I came home and found the following: The mother, weeping, was on her knees, embracing the child's legs, which were already growing cold. The local medic had just gone out and said that the child's last minutes had come. I sat down at the table by the window, opposite the shed, took my head in my hands, and gave myself over to despair. Suddenly I saw quite clearly that the doors of the shed were opening, and out of the shed my deceased brother Vladimir came, in priest's vestments. In his arms, facing towards me, was the icon of the Saviour Not-made-with-hands. I was stunned! I clearly saw how he walked, how his long dark hair was blowing in the wind; I heard his steps approaching. I grew cold and was petrified. He entered the room, came up to me, and in silence gave the icon into my hands and then vanished.

"I cannot communicate in words," Boris said to me with tears streaming down his cheeks, "what I experienced. I experienced God! I rushed to the shed, searched out the icon in the trunk and laid it on the child. In the morning of the following day our boy was completely well. The physicians who were treating him finally shrugged their shoulders. They took off the cast. There was no trace of tuberculosis! Here I understood everything! I understood that there is a God Who is merciful to sinners, and that by the prayers of Father Vladimir he had performed the marvellous wonder of the healing of the child and also the healing of my wife and myself, the salvation of our souls. Without hesitating, I resigned not only as the head of the Atheist League, but also from the Communist Party, of which I was already a member. My wife did likewise. I spoke openly and did not hide the miracle that had occurred to us. From that hour I told everyone everywhere about the miracle that had happened, and I called them to faith in God. By His holy will I was not arrested right away and, without putting it off another day, we came to my parents near Moscow, where they had settled after the end of the exile. We baptized the child, giving him the name of George."

I parted with Boris, of course, under the inexpressible impression of the miracle which had been performed upon him by the prayers of the righteous Father Vladimir, and I never saw him again. When in 1937 I came back to Moscow from the far south, I found out from his parents that a month after the baptism of the child they had gone to the Caucasus. Boris continued to tell everyone of his former spiritual error. And behold, while he was in perfect health, and was of course being secretly watched and followed, suddenly, in a single instant, he died, but not from a heart attack. It was not allowed for physicians to determine the cause of death. He had, of course, been killed by the Bolsheviks.

THE LIFE OF

Saint Alexander of Svir

THE BLESSED SEER OF THE HOLY TRINITY

CONCLUSION

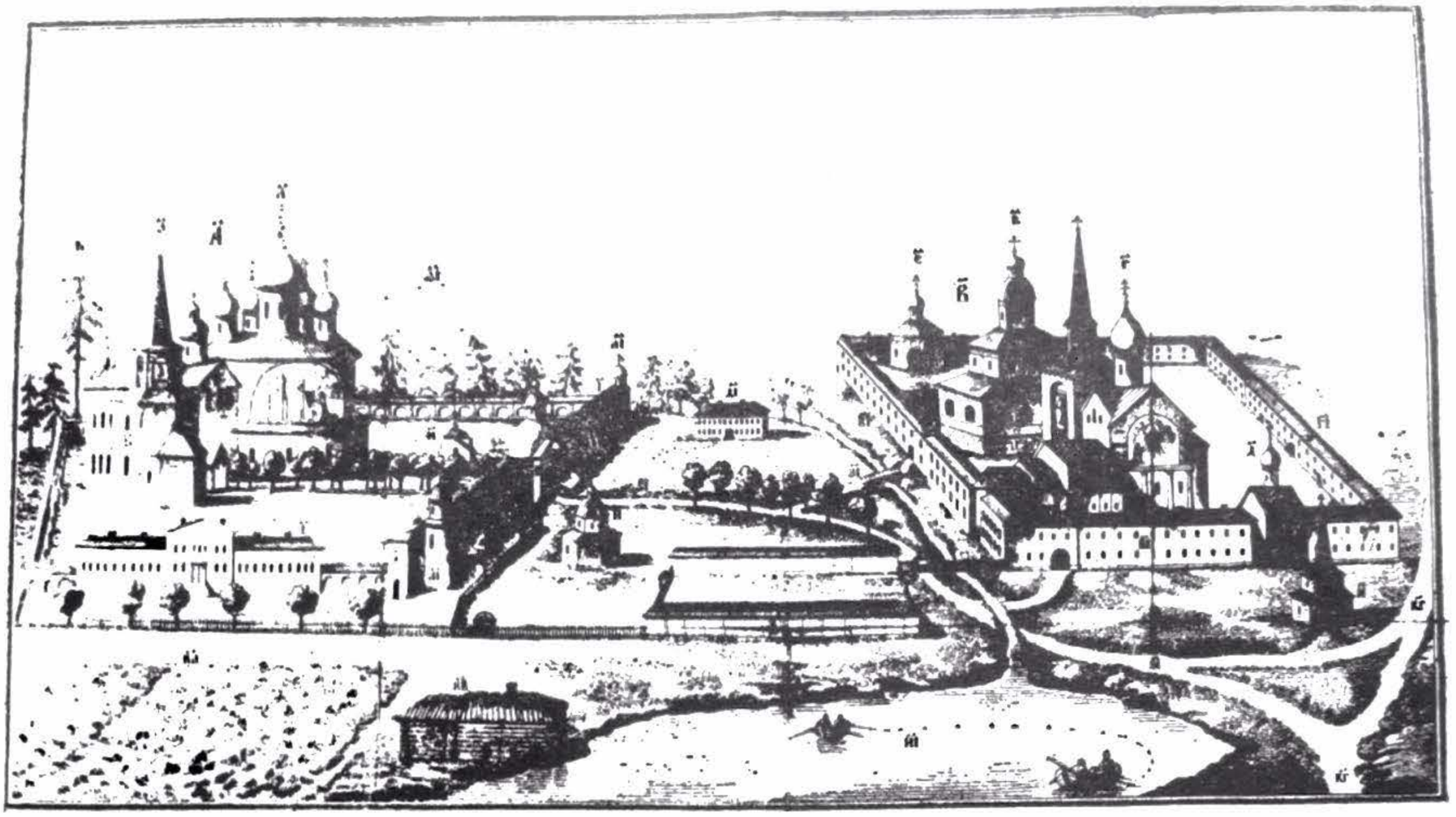
THEN DID St. Alexander undertake greater labors, taking care for the building of the church, and for the gathering of brethren, and for the establishment of a monastery. The number of brethren increased, and the monastery was well on its way to being built by the good favor of Almighty God, but there was then no priest in the monastery; and the brethren considered this very grievous and entreated St. Alexander to accept the priestly rank. The Saint, however, refused, saying: "This matter is above my strength." But concerning this the brethren entreated Archbishop Serapion of Great Novgorod, that he might command St. Alexander to accept the priestly rank. And Archbishop Serapion exhorted him to accept the priestly rank, having heard of his virtuous life. The Saint, even against his will, yielded to the exhortation of the Archbishop and the entreaty of the brethren, and by the laying on of the Archbishop's hands was made worthy of the priesthood. The Archbishop gave the Saint also his blessing to build a church, and having conversed with him for some time from the Divine Scriptures as to what a shepherd should be, and concerning much else that was of spiritual profit, he dismissed him in peace. And St. Alexander came to his monastery and took yet greater care for his flock of Christ's sheep which had been entrusted to him, and he undertook the building of the church. Coming with the brethren to the place previously indicated by the Angel, he prayed and began to build a small wooden church. And when the church was finished, the Saint sent two of his disciples, Theodore and Tikhon, to Great Novgorod, to entreat the Bishop concerning the sanctification of the church and concerning those things needful for the sanctification. And he gave them his blessing and what was needful for the sanctification. And thus the church of the Holy Trinity was sanctified.

St. Alexander ever blossomed in virtues; even though he had received the chief place, he did not change his rule but rather undertook yet greater labors, and yet more was he adorned by humility, making of himself an example for all. Wherefore, the monastery expanded, and the number of the brethren increased, and many of the nobles came to him for his blessing and prayers

and gave him of their possessions for the building of the monastery As for the rest of his labors and his advancement in virtues, it is not possible to speak here in detail; for he shone like a great lamp by the grace of the Holy Spirit which dwelt in him, and blossomed like a fragrant rose with spiritual fruits. And the Saint was seen as an Angel dwelling in the flesh, and he labored every day in the monastery's labors, working with his hands. He also went to the bakery, mixing the dough and baking bread, and making himself equal to the bread-bakers.

Once, when the feast of the Most Holy Trinity was at hand, those who were preparing what was needful for the guests found that there was no water at hand. The cellarer, whose name was Romanus, went to inform St. Alexander, so that he might command some of the brethren who were idle to bring water. But the Saint himself quickly arose and began to bring water from the lake to the kitchen. One of the brethren, seeing the Saint carrying water, went quickly to inform the brethren who were idle, and they went out with fervor, begging forgiveness of him, and carried water until there was an abundance. Again, it happened that there was no firewood in the kitchen for cooking. The cellarer went to inform the Saint, so that he would command one of the brethren who was idle to prepare firewood. Hearing this, the Saint said to him: "Brother, I am idle" (for he had ordered the brethren to go on some work); and taking an axe, he began to cut firewood. Certain of the brethren, seeing from their cells the Saint thus laboring, also took their axes and cut the wood according to need.

Sometimes the Saint would go at night to the workroom where the brethren milled grain for bread, and, the brethren being still asleep, he would see the portion of grain prepared for each brother, and taking it he would mill it and put it back in the same place, and go out to his cell. Thus did the Saint do many times. For the Saint had a rule for the brethren, that at night each would mill his own portion of grain before morning psalmody, and then they would begin the psalmody; and afterwards each would go out to the work assigned to him, and then again gather to sing the hours and hear the Divine Liturgy; and afterwards they would again go out to work. And laboring thus every day, they remained in love and fear of God, emulating in everything their spiritual shepherd and teacher. And he, as a true shepherd, showed himself as an example to them of all virtues, for he had true humility and great meekness, emulating in everything the Chief Shepherd, Christ. He considered himself to be one of the least ones and endured all sorrows with meekness. He was the first to be found in church and left the last of all. Never did he lie on a rug or pour water upon his body, but only washed his hands. His garment was



The St. Alexander of Svir Monastery (18th-century engraving).
Left: the original monastery with the church of the Holy Trinity.
Right: the Church of the Transfiguration, where the Saint's relics reposed.

simple and crude and much-patched. And many, seeing him unbecomingly clothed, thoughtlessly reproached him, reviling him. But the Saint accepted this reproach with joy.

The Saint had the custom every night to go about all the cells, desiring to find out how each one lived. And if he noticed anyone praying, or reading books, or performing handiwork in silence, he glorified God for such a one. But if anywhere he heard two or three gathered together and talking, there he would knock on the door, thus announcing that he had come, and then go away. And the next day he would call them and chastise them. He did not accuse them at once, but would speak to them as from a distance by means of parables, wishing to ascertain the warmth of their soul toward God. And if the brother would have a pure heart and open faith toward God and warm love, he would soon acknowledge his guilt, and falling down would beg forgiveness of him. But if the brother's heart should be covered over by a diabolic darkening, he would stand and think that he was talking of someone else, considering himself pure, until the Saint would accuse him and, having chastised him meekly from the Divine Scriptures and laid a penance on him, let him go.

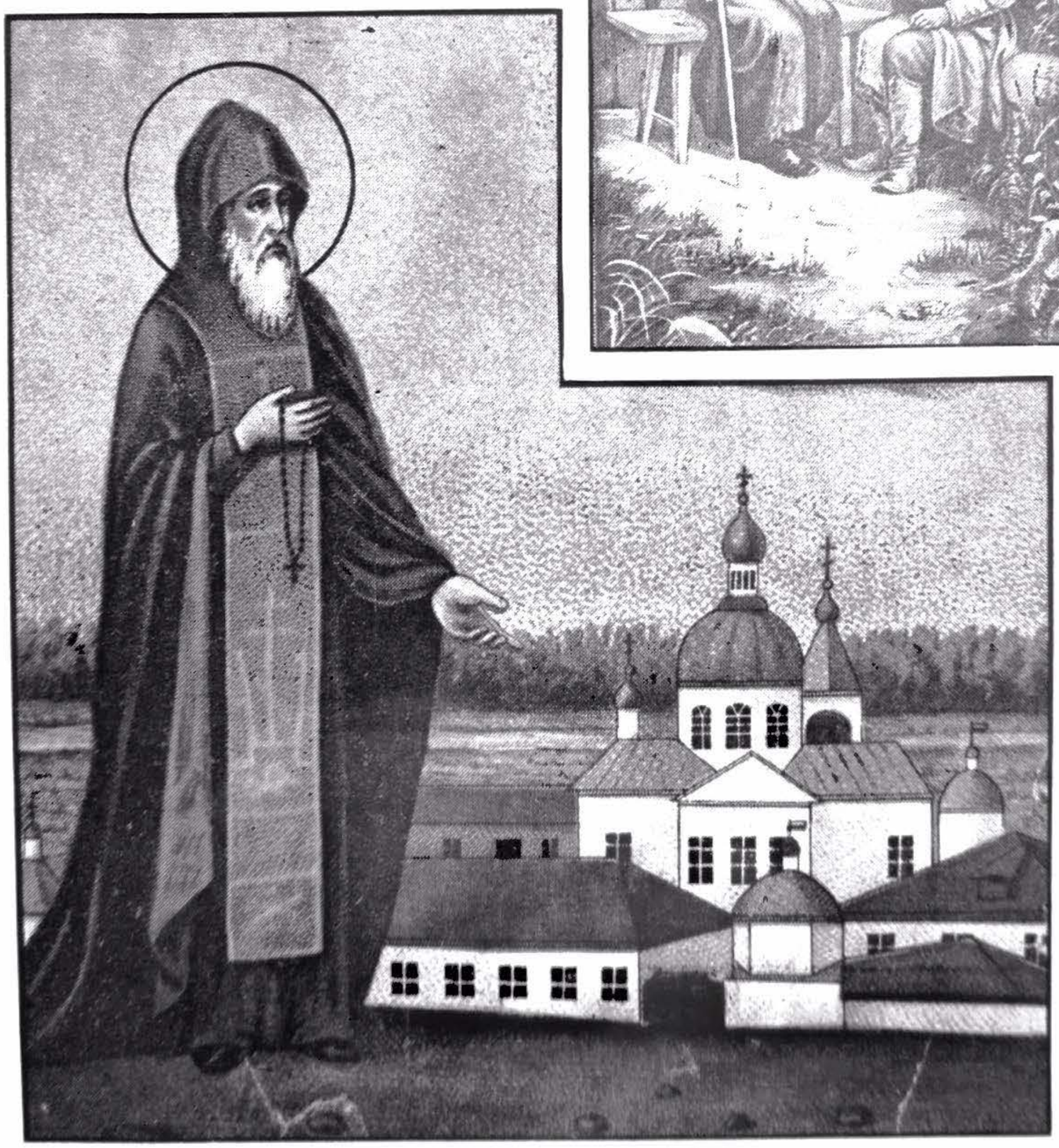
Thus did the Saint ever have great care for the flock entrusted to him by God. He taught the brethren ever to pay heed to the salvation of their souls, and to pray diligently to God, and not to converse after the prayer of Compline, and not to go from cell to cell, but to remain in their cells in silence, and pray to God for the salvation of their souls and for all men, to have handiwork and have ever the Psalms of David on their lips. Chastising them, the Saint would speak to them with exhortation thus: "It befits us, brethren, who are called monks, always to weep over our sins and offer a pure repentance to the Lord God Who is powerful to cleanse us of our sins; for there is no sin which conquers God's love of mankind. Wherefore, brethren, let us fall down before Him often with tears and confess to Him our sins, and He will save us with eternal salvation. For repentance is the way and the key to the Kingdom of Heaven, without which no one can enter into it. Let us keep to this path, O brethren; for the path now in this short life is narrow and sorrowful, but later in that endless future life there shall be abundant and unutterable rewards." And the brethren, as earth thirsting for water, received the word of his instruction, bringing forth the fruits of their labors to God, some a hundredfold, some sixtyfold, and some thirtyfold. And their life was like that of Angels, for they emulated in everything, each according to his strength, their shepherd and teacher.

The rumor of their good life spread through all the neighboring region, and many Christ-loving people came to St. Alexander, some to confess their sins to him and receive great benefit from his God-inspired teaching; others desiring to receive his blessing; still others to ask concerning matters which perplexed them; and others seeking healing for various infirmities and sorrows. And the Saint, being filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit, gave inexhaustibly what was profitable for them, according to their desire, and not one did he send away empty; wherefore they gave him of their possessions for the feeding of the brethren and the building of the monastery.

THE SAINT came to the wilderness desiring to live alone in silence, and so when, by the Providence of the All-seeing God, the brethren chosen by Him had increased and the monastery had become quite large, there was no place near the monastery convenient for the building of a mill, of which there was great need, for at the time of harvest the monks milled their own flour by hand. For this reason some of the brethren murmured against the Saint,that because of his lack of forethought they were burdened by so much labor. The

The unexpected encounter of St. Alexander and St. Adrian, then Prince Andrew.

A popular 19th-century illustration from *The Russian Pilgrim.*



St Adrian, Abbot of Ondrusov Monastery
A popular 19th-century lithograph-icon showing St. Adrian praying for his monastery as it appeared at the turn of this century.

THE HOLY TRINITY CHURCH OF SAINT ALEXANDER'S MONASTERY

Saint replied to them with meekness: "Brethren, I wished to live alone in this place in silence, but God has been pleased to erect a monastery to His glory. Wherefore I entreat you: labor in your prayers and do not grow faint, and let us allow God to take care for us."

Then the Saint began to think to himself how he might build a mill according to God for the need and the repose of the brethren from many labors. Now there was below the monastery a deep lake, with much water, and another lake level with the monastery high up the mountain, which likewise had much water and was not far from the monastery. The distance between the lakes was as the distance an arrow might be shot, or twice that far. And at a favorable time the Saint took the eldest among the brethren and went down the slope of the hill with them into the thick of the forest, from the edge of the upper lake, and from there, after praying, he began to dig, making a way for a river toward the monastery from the upper lake to the lower. And he commanded all the brethren to take their shovels and dig. And while they were digging, suddenly the water rushed down in its descent from the upper lake to the lower with a great noise and roaring, as if it were going to gouge a great pit below the monastery. The Saint and the brethren, seeing such an extraordinary rushing of water, thought that the monastery would be washed away. And bending his knees, the Saint began to pray to God, saying: "O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we sinners pray to Thee: hear us, Thine unworthy slaves, in this hour; reveal Thy power as Thou didst perform

the miracle in Colossæ through the Archangel Michael by Thy powerful right arm, restraining the rushing of much water within a small rock:* likewise now reveal Thy power, restrain these waters, that all may understand how Thou hearest those who fear Thee and glorify Thy thrice-holy name of Father and Son and Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen." Then he called in a loud voice on the name of Christ our God, and made the sign of the Cross with his right hand over the rushing rapids of the waters; and immediately the water stopped in its course. The brethren and all who saw this rejoiced exceedingly and glorified God Who had given grace to His Saint to perform a most glorious miracle; and they built on this stream of water a mill together with a crusher to serve the brethren and the monastery's need.

Then again the monastery expanded, for the sake of the virtuous life of St. Alexander and the miracles which he performed. For the Saint went from strength to strength, as if having a certain natural power of growth, and he became glorified with yet greater glory. And God put into his heart the good thought of building a stone church to the honor and glory of His thrice-holy Divine Name. But the brethren, hearing of this from him, began to be displeased with the Saint, saying: "Do you not know, O Father, that this place is sorrowful and poor, and how shall we have such boldness to prepare what is needful for such an undertaking?" The Saint, however, was not at all disturbed by this, nor did he grieve, but rather exhorted them with meekness, saying: "I only entreat you, brethren, that we make the beginning of this undertaking, and God Who loves mankind will grant us inexhaustibly all that is needful; for it is man's to begin, but God's to complete." And coming to a certain place, he prayed to God Who had favored his monastery to be built, and began to dig the earth, and he found clay quite near the monastery. And he rejoiced greatly, and guarding himself with faith and placing his hope in God, he began to make bricks, and likewise to prepare other necessary supplies for the construction. Then he sent three of his disciples, Anthony, Leontius, and Herodion, to the Autocrat himself, Great Prince Basil Ioannovich, with the petition that he might send skilled workmen for the building of the church. And the Christ-loving Great Prince with joy gave an abundance of what was needful for the building of the church and monastery, and skilled workmen, and a supervisor for the work.

* When pagans attempted to destroy the church of the Archangel by directing a torrent of water against it, the Archangel himself appeared and with a blow of his staff opened a fissure which swallowed up the water. This event is commemorated by the Church on September 6.

And thus the wise shepherd, St. Alexander, expanded the monastery yet more, and commanded that cells be built in the form of a square, and the church was in the center of the monastery on the place where in the beginning the Angel of the Lord had commanded him to build a large church in the name of the Holy Trinity, and it was visible from everywhere as in a mirror. Then he entreated Archbishop Macarius of Great Novgorod concerning the sanctification of the church, and by his command the church was sanctified. Then he built surpassingly a refectory and other buildings needful for the brethren.

DIVERSE ARE the gifts of the Holy Spirit, as the divine Apostle says, and to everyone is given what is for profit, according to his faith (I Cor. 12). Thus also our holy Father Alexander acquired much faith toward God and exhibited before Him many and various virtues. Therefore he received from Him much grace and diverse workings in the Holy Spirit: for he gave comfort to the sorrowing, healing to the infirm, correction to sinners, and understood what was hidden, and prophesied the future as if present, and gave inexhaustibly every benefit to all; for there was in his heart a source of living water.

In the year 1525, the fortieth year after the Saint's coming to the wilderness, a certain man by the name of Daniel came into a terrible affliction. He was pious and filled with the fear of God, and he was a spiritual son and benefactor of St. Alexander, living twenty miles from his monastery. His affliction worsened, and for seven days he was as if dead. On the eighth day he moved on his bed and began to groan and be frightened; but he could not say anything, and thus he remained for eight days, and then he began to speak. And he began to tell those who were present how that, on the seventh night of his terrible affliction, two Angels had come for his soul, but then had been forbidden to take it by a voice from above. "And I began to entreat them: 'O holy Angels of God! Have mercy on me, and show me in what rank our holy Father and teacher Alexander is, and in what place is the eternal dwelling prepared for him.' And they, so that I would not grieve, carried me to the east, to a certain bright and most glorious place, filled with all joy and fragrance, and they showed me there the dwellings prepared by God for many Saints. And again, taking me from there, the holy Angels carried me to another most glorious and beautiful place, filled with all good things which it is impossible to express in words. And I saw in the midst of those beautiful things a wondrous city, built of pure gold and precious stones, and in it winged

(*Continued on page* 155)

A Treasury of Saint Herman's Spirituality

XIX

SAINT HERMAN AND THE ANGELS

We glorify thee, our holy Father Herman....
instructor of monks and converser with Angels.
Megalynarion of Monk-Saints

FILLED WITH THE SONG of Angels, thy forest cell was empty, save for thee alone, singing, while the people greatly wondered. And again an Angel served thee, sanctifying the waters with the Jordan's blessing, calling: O all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord and exalt Him above all forever. *Canon to St. Herman, Canticle VIII*

XX

ST. HERMAN'S DISCIPLE, A CONVERSER WITH ANGELS

With whom is it better and more pleasant to converse, with men or with Angels? Of course, with Angels.
St. Herman of Alaska

DURING THE YEARS when S. Yanovsky was preparing himself to enter a monastery, after already living a true monk's life in the world for many years, he became seriously ill, and at that time he was deemed worthy, like his holy preceptor St. Herman himself, to converse with an Angel, as he himself related shortly before his death:

"In the night of the 17th to the 18th of the month of February (1860) I did not sleep for a long time, reflecting, and most of all I was occupied with the thought of God, about how merciful the Lord is to the human race: he be-

came incarnate, he endured such terrible sufferings and death itself; and how ungrateful we are, and how distracted we are by the vanity of this world! Finally, towards morning, I fell asleep, and what did I see: It was as if there were nothing at all — neither the screen which stood near my bed, nor the window, nor the walls — but only the clear, blue, cloudless sky, and the air was clear and warm. And as I was looking and admiring this, suddenly I saw an Angel descending from heaven in the form of a child of indescribable beauty, his glance so bright. With reverent attention I looked at him, and saw that in his left hand there was a beautiful apple branch. The edges of its leaves appeared to me as if gilded, and above there was an apple. With what ecstasy I admired the dweller of heaven, how everything about him was orderly, airy, transparent. What a smile he had; I had never seen such beauty upon earth. But his glance was directed not at me, and I thought that he would pass by. To whom, I thought, was he carrying such a precious gift of paradise? As soon as I thought this, the Angel stopped right opposite me, turned his splendid face to me, and directed his radiant eyes directly at me. His glance was so splendid that I forgot my illness, forgot everything on the earth. He addressed me and began to speak. His voice was extraordinarily clear and melodic, but not like the face of a child but rather that of a youth, and he said: "This branch is for him who will weep over his sins, who will endure everything on the earth. Ask of God patience, and when you will have endured everything with patience, then you will likewise be given an apple!' Having said this, he flew away and was concealed from my eyes. I stretched towards him my sinful hands and cried out: 'O holy Angel, pray that God will grant me patience!' But everything had ended. There was no Angel. I awoke and began to weep and bitterly lament that by my sins I so frequently anger God and banish from myself my guardian Angel, who is just as splendid as this one was. It was already nine o'clock. I had forgotten the time, had forgotten everything, that children were sitting around me; I wept and could not stop my tears... The children immediately rushed upon me and began to ask: 'What is it? What has happened to you?' They called their mother, and she began to ask: 'What are you weeping about?' I could only say: 'I am weeping over my sins.' 'What sins? You just received Communion yesterday.' 'Yes,' I said, 'I received Communion, but I did not weep over my sins.' I asked them to leave me and call my spiritual father; I did not wish to tell them about it, fearing that they would tell it to others. Wondrous are Thy works, O Lord! Wondrous is Thy mercy to sinful man!"

Schema-Monk Sergius (Yanovsky)

The SCROLL

CONTAINING
SIX CHAPTERS ON MENTAL PRAYER
By Our Father of Blessed Memory,
ELDER PAISIUS VELICHKOVSKY

CHAPTER THREE

THAT THIS SACRED MENTAL PRAYER IS A SPIRITUAL ART.

LET IT BE KNOWN that our divine Fathers call this sacred mental doing of prayer an art. St. John of the Ladder in the 27th step, on Silence (27:21-23), teaching of the mystery of this mental prayer, says: "If you have studied well this art, you cannot but know of what I speak. Sitting on a high place, observe, if only you are able, and then you will see how, when, and from whence, and how many and what kind of thieves come in order to enter in and steal your clusters of grapes. This watchman, when he becomes tired, rises up and prays; then again he sits down and manfully undertakes his previous doing."

St. Hesychius, the Presbyter of Jerusalem, says concerning this sacred prayer: "Sobriety is a spiritual art which, with God's help, completely delivers a man from passionate thoughts and words and evil deeds" (Century 1, ch. 1).

St. Nicephorus the Faster, teaching concerning the same thing, says: "Come and I shall declare to you an art, or rather a science, of eternal, or rather heavenly dwelling, which leads its doer without labor and without danger into the harbor of dispassion."

The aforementioned Holy Fathers, as has been indicated, call this holy prayer an art, I think, for the following reason: just as a man cannot learn an art by himself, not having a skilled artist [to show him], so also it is impossible to learn this mental doing of prayer without a skilled instructor. But

BLESSED PAISIUS

DRAGOMIRNA MONASTERY

this matter, according to St. Nicephorus, comes to most or even to everyone, from instruction; and they are rare who have received it from God without instruction, by painful forcing of themselves and warmth of faith.

The rule of church prayer according to the Typicon and the holy church books, which Orthodox Christians, both laymen and monks, must offer daily as tribute to the Heavenly King, may be performed and read orally by anyone who can read and write, without instruction. But to offer to God the mystical sacrifice of prayer with the mind in the heart, since this is a spiritual art, is impossible without instruction, as has been indicated above.

Being a spiritual art, it comprises also the unceasing work of monks, so that not only by renunciation of the world and what is in the world, by a change of name at their tonsure and distinctive garments, by an unmarried, virginal, pure life of voluntary poverty, by distinctive food and place of dwelling — but also by their very mental and spiritual heedfulness according to the inner man, and by prayer, monks might have a work which is distinct from and surpasses that of people in the world.

The Life and Ascetic Labor of Our Father, Elder Paisius, Archimandrite of the Holy Moldavian Monasteries of Niamets and Sekoul. Part Four.

THE MONASTERY OF DRAGOMIRNA

45. THE DEPARTURE OF PAISIUS WITH THE BRETHREN FOR VLACHIA.
46. THE MONASTERY OF DRAGOMIRNA IN MOLDAVIA IS BESTOWED ON HIM.

AND WHEN HE had prepared himself, our Father took two boats, and he himself with all the brethren of the Slavonic tongue boarded one of them, and Father Bessarion with the brethren of the Moldavian tongue the other. In all there were 64 of the brethren at that time, and they sailed safely with God's help to Constantinople, and from Constantinople even to Galata; and coming out on dry land, they came to Vlachia, to the Skete which is called Barzopesht. And finding no place in that land, Paisius came to Jassy and was received with love by the Metropolitan, Kyr Gabriel, and the pious ruler Gregory Callimachus the governor; and they gave him the monastery of the Descent of the Holy Spirit which is called Dragomirna, with all its estates. And the pious governor confirmed with a document that the monastery of the brethren should be free of all taxes; and His Eminence the Metropolitan entreated the Bishop of Radautska that he should entrust the monastery to Paisius with all love and fitting honor.

The Dragomirna Monastery of the Holy Spirit is near the city of Sochava and the village of Itzkana, which is on the boundary between Bukovina and Moldavia, and it is situated in a gorge of the Carpathian Mountains. In outward appearance it is a real fortress, and it is surrounded by a wall with towers, so that it could serve the residents of the city of Sochava as a refuge during the attacks of the Zaporozhsky Cossacks and Tatar hordes. The time of the monastery's foundation, as well as the name of its founder, is not known. It is only known that the monastery existed already by the end of the 16th century. In the year 1602 the bishop of Radautska, Anastasius Krymka, built in

the monastery a church in honor of the Descent of the Holy Spirit; in one of the towers over the monastery gates he erected a church in the name of St. Nicholas; and in the monastery garden he built a church in the name of the holy Prophets Enoch and Elijah and the holy Apostle John the Theologian.

When this monastery was offered to Elder Paisius, it was in rather a pitiful condition. There were no more than five cells in it, the refectory was without a roof, there were few books, and the whole number of farm animals was no more than six bulls. But the monastery occupied a large area, it was situated in a remote and quiet place, and it had the full possibility of being given in time a well-ordered appearance. Therefore, both the Elder and the brethren were very satisfied with the place that was thus offered to them. Soon generous contributions began to come to the monastery from many benefactors who desired to help the Elder. The general sympathy and generous help deeply touched the Elder and the brethren.*

And so our Father settled there with all the community of the brethren, thanking and praising God with tears of joy over His Providence which is beyond understanding and His endless mercy, because He had inclined the hearts of all toward love and mercy for them who were strangers.

47. Father Alexius. 48. The tonsure of Paisius in the Schema.

AFTER A LITTLE TIME there came here to visit Elder Paisius and the brethren, from the Skete of Merlopolyany in the land of Vlachia, the beloved friend of his school years, Hieromonk Alexius, who was likewise a disciple of the Elder Basil. And he spent the whole winter in the monastery of Dragomirna, being detained by the love of our Father; and often did they enjoy spiritual conversation together. And our Father desired that Father Alexius should clothe him in the Schema, as they were disciples of the same Elder; and this was done. However, Father Alexius did not change his name, but as he had been called Paisius by the Elder Basil when the latter had tonsured him in the mantle, so did Father Alexius leave his name in the Schema. And there was great joy for all the community of the brethren. And after the most bright feast of the Resurrection of Christ Father Alexius departed, and our Father and the whole community of monks accompanied him with great love and reverence. This Alexius, after the Elders Basil and Theodosius, was the Elder in the Skete of Merlopolyany.

* These two paragraphs are from Chetverikov, vol. 1, pp. 92-93.

Dragomirna Monastery from within: the main Church of the Holy Spirit and the gate tower, as they look today

49. Establishment of the common life according to the Typicon of the Holy Mountain of Athos.

AFTER THIS our Blessed Father, having reposed a little from the labor, began to restore and confirm the order of his common life according to the rule of our God-bearing Fathers Basil the Great and those who have learned from him, Theodosius the Great and Theodore the Studite, the founders of cœnobitism. This order was not begun as though it had not existed before, for it had been begun on the Holy Mountain and kept; but it was, as it were, begun anew after the resettlement, and it was confirmed by being restored.

And first of all, as regards church services, our Father established the order of the Holy Mountain, according to the rule of the Orthodox Catholic

The church in the monastery garden dedicated to the Prophets Enoch and Elijah and St. John the Evangelist

Eastern Church, just as it had been before. And he ordained that the singing on the right side be in Slavonic, and on the left side in Moldavian. Next, he ordained that none of the brethren should in any way presume to call anything mine or thine, but everything was in common as sent from God, and he firmly commanded that the rules of the common life be kept; and everything that was needful was given to everyone by the Elder. Meals were taken in common by everyone, apart from the sick and those who were quite old and infirm. Obediences within the monastery, in the kitchen, the bakery, and elsewhere, were to be performed by the brethren themselves. The various handiworks needful for the common life, the brethren were to perform with fear of God according to their strength, and not by force or with disturbance. Any disobedience, talking back, or self-will in the common labors, by which things the commandments are violated, was to be banished from the soul of every brother; but first place was to be given to obedience, humility, patience and peace, love and fear of God, and these were to rule in the community of the brethren; and above all these, there was to be a complete cutting off of one's own will and one's own understanding.

In the general obediences there was to be, and to be kept, silence on the lips and prayer secretly in the mind. And the Elder himself often went

out with the brethren on common obedience and worked together with everyone with all humility of wisdom, silence, and prayer, showing himself as an example of humility and love, and saying: "O brethren, let none be idle, apart from the reason of extreme infirmity or old age, for from idleness is born every evil."

During the time of the wheat harvest, the brethren sometimes spent several days at a time in the field. For the sake of the church rule of prayer and other church needs, a priest would go together with the brethren into the field, having the Divine Mysteries with him. Often the Elder would send someone with medical knowledge also, and sometimes he himself went and would spend three or four days at a time together with the brethren in the field, and this would be a great feast for the brethren. The Elder would bless their labors, would rejoice at their zeal and converse with them. When the Elder could not visit the harvesters himself he would send them a written greeting. He would write them: "Guard yourself from envy; wherever envy is, there the Spirit of God is not. Hold your tongue so that it will not speak empty words. He who guards his tongue keeps his soul from sorrow. From the tongue proceed life and death. The elder should teach the younger and inexperienced. In everyone there should be humility, good-will and love. One must strengthen oneself by the fear of God, and by the remembrance of death and eternal tortures. Every day one should confess his thoughts to an elder. One should repeat the prayer of Jesus constantly. Offer to God a sacrifice pure, unblemished, and fragrant according to your Christian vow. Offer your labors and your bloody sweat as the sacrifice of a whole burnt offering; may the burning from the sun be to you as the patience of the martyrs." In conclusion, the Elder entreated the Lord to preserve the laborers from every spiritual and bodily evil and to protect them against all the nets of the devil. Such epistles, penetrated with love and concern, encouraged and inspired the brethren and made the difficult and exhausting labor easy and joyful for them.*

In the cells in solitude there was to be the reading of the God-bearing Fathers and prayer performed by the mind skillfully in the heart according to the advancement of each, and frequent prostrations with tears, according to the strength of each.

Everyone, and above all beginners, was to confess his thoughts each evening to his spiritual father. For confession is the foundation of true repentance and the forgiveness of sins and the hope of salvation for a soul which truly repents with sorrow over its sins. And if some disturbance were to occur

* This paragraph is from Chetverikov, vol. 1, pp. 94-95.

among the brethren, there must be true reconciliation on that very day, according to the Scripture: *Let not the sun set on your anger*. And if someone were to grow hard in heart, not wishing to be reconciled, he was to be cut off and not allowed over the threshold of the Church, nor allowed to say the prayer "Our Father" until he became reconciled. Such among the brethren were assigned and sent to obediences outside the monastery from whom there could not come any scandal to worldly people or harm to their own souls. If it became unavoidable for the sake of the work to do something which violated the commandments, the Elder commanded that the work be abandoned; for it is better, he would say, that the work perish than that the commandment of God be disdained and one fall under eternal condemnation. And to sum up everything together: in the community of the brethren, both within and outside the monastery, in all obediences, our Father strove ever that there be among all the brethren peace and love in God, reverence and fear of God, humility and submission, with complete cutting off of one's own will and one's own understanding before the Elder and before each other.

50. Father Honorius.

IN THIS WAY ALSO our Father ordained that all the other parts of the Rule of St. Basil the Great and the other God-bearing Fathers be performed in the whole community of the brethren, and he commanded that they be preserved inviolate. Threatening the brethren with spiritual canons for transgressions, pouring out his fatherly mercifulness upon all his spiritual children, embracing them all with unhypocritical love and warming and instructing them, and assigning obediences to each with understanding and according to the strength of each, he impressed upon them that they should fulfill the obediences cheerfully and with zeal. He ordered the beloved brother Honorius, who knew in part the art of healing, to treat the sick and the quite infirm and aged in the infirmary and to grant them every repose. For this man was most merciful and consoling both by his spiritual conversation and in bodily needs; and from his holy and fervent obedience and humility, he advanced in warm love towards God and towards his neighbor and in spiritual understanding. Wherefore the blessed Elder had this brother, who was most beloved of him, over the ill as his own eye; and to him alone was freedom given, for the sake of the sick, to take money from the cell of the Elder on his own authority, as much as he wished. And the Elder, just one year after his own repose (1795), received this Father to himself in heavenly repose by God's will.

Next Issue: Dragomirna — the Translation of the Patristic Sources.

Saint Alexander of Svir

(*Continued from page* 144)

men were singing terrible and most sweet hymns, and there was joy and rejoicing unutterable. And the Angels led me into that great joy and into the most bright city; and suddenly I saw in the midst of that city our holy Father and teacher Alexander sitting on a throne in great glory, and on his head was a crown of gold adorned with precious stones and diverse flowers, and his face shone as the sun, and his garments were white as the light; and about him were his rejoicing disciples as well-speaking swallows, and their garments were also white as the light. And I, when I saw him sitting in such glory, was all the more overcome by terror and joy, and I came with fear and bowed down to the ground before him, and said: 'Bless me, my holy Father and spiritual teacher.' And he, looking upon me and blessing me, said to me: 'May God bless you, child Daniel; what have you come here to ask?' I replied to him: 'I also would wish to be here, if you have mercy on me, my holy Father.' And he said to me: 'If you wish to be here, go back and labor in asceticism.' And again the Angels took me back to a certain place on the bank of a river [which was near his village] and showed me there a new church, and then became invisible. And I found myself again on my bed."

And when the Lord had relieved this Daniel of his affliction, he came to the monastery and informed the Saint in detail of what he had seen. When he heard this, St. Alexander smiled a little, and then burst into tears and said to him: "Yea, my child Daniel, you saw a holy Angel who appeared in my form; but I am sinful, and how can I receive such a gift from God as He has prepared for His Saints? I say to you, my child: preserve what you have seen as long as I shall be alive." And receiving the blessing of the Saint, Daniel returned to his home, rejoicing and glorifying God Who had glorified His Saint. And on the place where the Angels had placed him he built a church in the name of St. John Chrysostom, in the form which had been shown him then by the Angels. This vision occurred eight years before the repose of St. Alexander.

But the more God glorified His Saint, the more did the latter humble himself before God and men, knowing that not otherwise will one inherit future eternal glory than by first subduing the pride of the flesh under the feet of the soul's humility of wisdom. Therefore, he labored in all the monastery works like the least servant of the monastery; and he was clothed in a garment so poor and old that visitors could not recognize that he was the abbot but took him for one of the poor ones.

SUCH WAS THE LIFE of blessed Alexander, and such was the grace of God which was active in him. A few years before the repose of this marvellous wonderworker, God placed in his heart the good thought of building a splendid stone church to the honor and glory of our Most Holy Lady Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary, in the name of Her honorable and glorious Protection. And thus he began the work, and entreated the help of the Autocrat for the building of the church, and having received this, soon placed the foundation of the church.

Then one night, the Saint was praying his usual rule before the Icon of the Most Holy Mother of God, and he prayed long and with tender feeling and tears. He sang also the canon of thanksgiving, which is the Akathist. After this he sat a little to rest, and he said to his disciple Athanasius: "Child, be sober and vigilant; for in this hour there will be a wondrous and terrible visitation." And suddenly he heard a great voice: "Behold, the Lord comes, and She Who gave Him birth." The Saint went quickly to the balcony of his cell, and a great light shone upon him and likewise upon the whole monastery, brighter than the sun's rays. And the Saint, looking up, saw the Most Holy Mother of God upon the foundation of the church of Her honorable Protection, in the place of the Altar, as a Queen sitting upon a throne, holding our Lord Jesus Christ as a child in Her arms, and around Her a multitude of Angelic choirs stood and shone in unutterable brightness. When the Saint saw this wondrous vision, he fell down upon the ground and could not look at that unutterable light, being seized with fear and terror. But the Most Holy Mother of God, speedy helper of all Christians, said to him: "Arise, chosen one of My Son and God; for I have come to visit you, My beloved, and to view the foundation of My church; the prayer of your lips has been heard, sorrow no more. And as you have prayed for your disciples and for your monastery, behold, from henceforth they shall abound in everything; and not only during your lifetime, but after your departure also, I shall be always with your monastery, giving what is needful inexhaustibly. Behold and see carefully, how many are the monks who have come into your flock, who are to be instructed by you in the path of salvation in the name of the Holy Trinity." The Saint arose: seeing and being astonished at the unutterable apparition of the Mother of God, he saw a multitude of his monks going to the foundation of Her church, some bringing stones and some bricks and some other things for the building of the church. And again the Most Holy Mother of God said to him: "My beloved, if anyone bring even a single brick for the building of My church in the Name of Jesus Christ My Son and God, he will not lose his reward." And having said this, She became invisible.

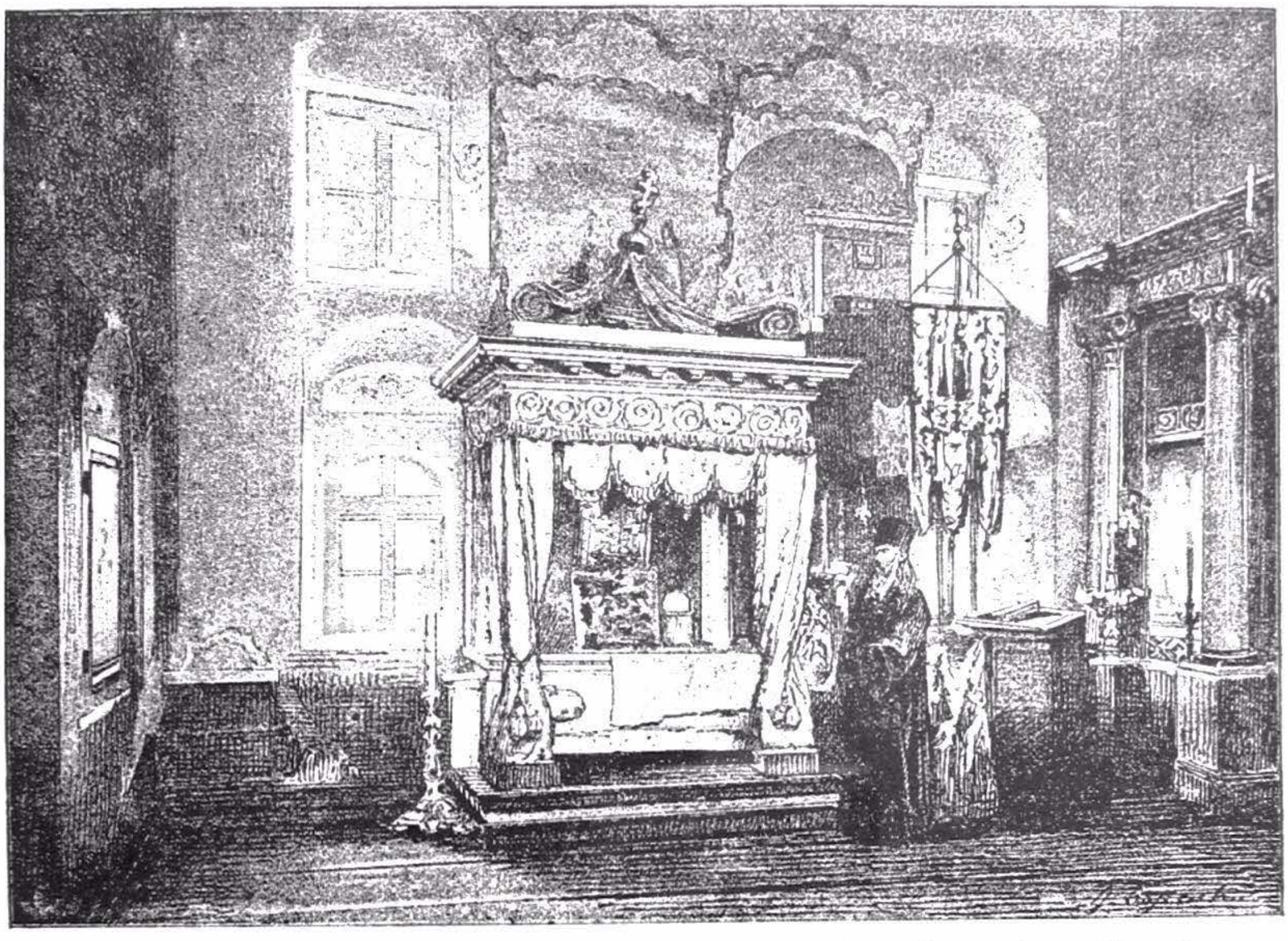
The Saint, from the fearful and unutterable vision and from hearing the voice of the Mother of God, was terrified and was all trembling from fear; and scarcely coming to himself, he found his disciple Athanasius lying on the ground from fear, like a dead man, and he raised him up. His disciple began to weep and lament and to throw himself at the Saint's feet, saying: "Inform me, Father, what kind of wondrous and terrible vision this was, at which my soul all but separated from its union with the flesh because of that unutterable, brilliant light." And the Saint, greatly rejoicing in soul, his face radiant from this joy, could say nothing but: "Wait, child, while my spirit trembles from this wondrous vision." And standing, he marvelled at the vision; and in a little while he said: "Go, child, and ask my spiritual father Isaiah to come." And when Isaiah had come, he confessed to him everything in detail. Hearing this, Isaiah was filled with great joy, and praised God. The Saint remained that whole night without sleep, paying heed within himself to the unutterable vision. And he confessed it also to me, humble Herodion, as if it had occurred to someone else and not himself.

At last this earthly angel and heavenly man, our holy Father Alexander, who had travelled with love of labor from his youth in the steps of Christ's commandments, and had drawn near to the Lord Whom he loved by a narrow and sorrowful path, attained an honorable and great old age. And a year before his departure from this brief life into eternal life, having foreseen his approaching death by the Holy Spirit, he called together the brethren, saying to them: "Behold now, O brethren, the end of my life approaches, and my departure from this world is near. I give you over into the hands of the living God and the Most Pure Mother of God. May He preserve you and confirm you in His love; and may the Most Pure Virgin Mother of God, by Her superb intercession, deliver you from all the attacks of visible and invisible enemies." And they, hearing such words from the lips of their beloved teacher, grieved sorely and were filled with lamentation and tears. And the Saint, as a child-loving father, comforted them and said: "Even if I am departing from you in body, yet in spirit I shall be inseparably with you. And may you understand this: If I have acquired grace before God, this monastery after my death also shall not at all grow poor, by the prayers of our Most Blessed Lady the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary, if you shall remain in the commandments of God and there shall be love among you. I leave you in place of myself four brethren who are priest-monks, Isaiah, Nicodemus, Leontius, and Herodion, and of these whichever God desires and Archbishop Macarius shall bless, may he be abbot for you in my stead. Submit to him and do everything according

to his command, and remain void of offense in Orthodoxy, and have oneness of mind toward each other, and preserve purity of soul and body."

And again, when the time came for his departure to the Lord, he instructed the brethren much for their spiritual profit, saying: "Behold, I am departing from you; but I entrust you to Almighty God and His Most Pure Mother: may She be for you a refuge and wall from all the attacks of the enemy." The brethren wept and lamented at the separation from their most sweet teacher. And they asked him where they should bury his honorable body after his repose. And he commanded them, saying: "My beloved brethren, I entreat you to do this: bind my sinful body by the feet with a rope, and drop it into the midst of the marsh, and having put it into the moss, trample on it with your feet." But they said: "No, Father, we cannot do this." And they entreated him with tears that they might bury his body in the monastery near the church of the Holy Trinity. Then the Saint said to them: "If, brethren, you will not do this, then bury me near the church of the Lord's Transfiguration." (That church was in the Saint's solitary hermitage, one or two arrows' span from the monastery.) And having prayed to the Lord for the peace of the world, and for the good condition of the holy Churches, and for his monastery, and having bestowed upon the brethren his last kiss, he spoke his final words: "O Lord, into Thy hands I commend my spirit," and he reposed; and his holy soul ascended to the Lord Whom he had loved from his youth.

And all the brethren who were in the monastery wept and lamented greatly, not being able to bear the separation from their good shepherd and teacher. And they sorrowed over him so much that, if it had been possible, they were ready to die together with him. His honorable body which had labored so much in life, they placed honorably and reverently upon a couch, and they accompanied it with psalms and hymns, pouring out fountains of tears. And the face of the Saint shone, not as is usual for the dead, but as if he were alive, showing his purity of soul and the reward which he had received from the Lord. And thus they buried him honorably, weeping and lamenting, and reverently singing the funeral hymns, in his solitary hermitage near the church of the Transfiguration of the Lord, at the right side of the Altar. The Saint had lived for 85 years in all, and he reposed in the year 1533, on the 30th day of August. And this precious treasure, his honorable and holy body, remained in the heart of the earth, and it gives forth, like an ever-flowing spring, an unfailing stream of healings for all who come with faith to his honorable grave. May this account of his life and miracles be for the benefit of those who hear it and to the glory of the Holy Trinity, Father and Son and Holy Spirit, and to the praise of this marvellous new wonderworker, our holy Father Alexander. Amen.



The Reliquary of St. Alexander in the Holy Transfiguration Church

Saint Alexander's Disciples

BY 1547, fourteen years after his death, there was already a church service in honor of St. Alexander, and in 1559 a wing of a church in Moscow was dedicated to him.

Under Abbot Theodoritus (1615-1628) the monastery of St. Alexander with its churches was destroyed by the invading Germans and Lithuanians, and 27 of the monks, together with 32 lay servants of the monastery, received martyrs' crowns at this time. As soon as order was restored to Russia, however, by order of Tsar Michael Romanov the monastery was re-established and a new church of the Holy Trinity was built. In 1641, in place of the destroyed church of the Transfiguration, a new stone church was built, and while excavations were being made for its foundation, on April 17 of that year, the relics of St. Alexander were uncovered and found to be incorrupt. In 1643 a silver reliquary was built for them, in which they reposed until the Revolution.

St. Alexander had many holy disciples. Among them may be mentioned: ST. ADRIAN OF ONDRUSOV (Aug. 26) was the very Andrew Zavalishin who discovered St. Alexander in his wilderness. Under the Saint's influence he left the world and became a monk in Valaam Monastery, where he spent several years. Later, with the Saint's blessing, he led a hermit's life on a peninsula of

Lake Ladoga, where disciples soon joined him. His holy life converted the chiefs of two nearby robber bands. He died a martyr, being killed in the wilderness by robbers (1549). After two years he appeared in sleep to several of his disciples, who found his body incorrupt (May 17).

ST. GENNADIUS OF VAZHE LAKE (Jan. 8 and Feb. 9; †1516) was St. Alexander's disciple when the latter was still living alone. After several years the Saint blessed him to live as a hermit, and he spent the rest of his life laboring in a cave-cell not far away, on Vazhe Lake. Near the end of his life he accepted a few disciples, and the Lord revealed to him that later there would be a church and a monastery on this site.

ST. NICEPHORUS OF VAZHE LAKE (Feb. 9, †1550), mentioned in St. Alexander's Life, joined the Saint after the latter's monastery had been founded and was once sent by the Saint to spend eight days in spiritual converse with St. Cyril of New Lake. After a pilgrimage to Kiev, St. Nicephorus returned to found a monastery on the site of St. Gennadius' labors. He gathered many brethren and died in peace.

ST. MACARIUS OF OREDEZH (Aug. 9) founded the Dormition Hermitage not far from his Elder's monastery, on the river Oredezh; he died peacefully in the year 1532.

ST. MACARIUS THE ROMAN (Jan. 19 and Aug. 15; †1550) came from the West seeking the true Church, and he found what he sought as a disciple of St. Alexander. Later he lived as a hermit, and disciples gathered around him. (See *The Orthodox Word*, 1972, no. 1.)

ST. ATHANASIUS OF SYANDEM (Jan. 18, † after 1550) was a disciple of St. Alexander on Valaam, and later he rejoined the Saint in the monastery of the Holy Trinity. He was present when the Mother of God appeared to the Saint. Later he founded a hermitage not far from St. Adrian, with whom he was in close contact, and died as a hermit on an island in Lake Syandem.

STS. IGNATIUS, LEONID, DIONYSIUS, THEODORE, THEOPHAN, CORNELIUS, AND ATHANASIUS of the Oyat Hermitage near the Svir River. This monastery was erected on the place where the parents of St. Alexander were buried.

St. Alexander's monastery existed until the time of the Revolution, when it was destroyed by a revolutionary band. Abbot Eugene and five of the brethren received martyrs' crowns at their hands, singing "Christ is risen" while being shot after digging their own common grave. The monastery was turned into a concentration camp, similar to Solovki, where lumbering was performed by slave labor. The relics of St. Alexander were burned and were never heard of again. And thus St. Alexander, even as St. Sabbas of Serbia at the hands of the Turks, suffered the martyrdom of his holy relics, thus showing the participation of the heavenly Holy Russia in the sufferings of the Russian land.

Two Recent Communications

CONCERNING GRACE-GIVEN HELP BY THE PRAYERS OF ARCHBISHOP JOHN

IN CONTINUING the collection of materials which was begun by Bishop Savva of Edmonton for the Life of Blessed Archbishop John Maximovitch (see *The Orthodox Word,* 1972, no. 6), the Saint Herman of Alaska Brotherhood has received recently a number of communications revealing the ever-increasing veneration of this great wonderworker of our own times among people of various nationalities, many of whom never knew him personally, and also testifying to Vladika's continued intercession for those in sickness and need. Here, translated from Russian and French, are two of these communications.

1. "Concerning Vladika John Maximovitch I know only what I have read in *The Orthodox Word.* Last year, in the days after October 20, my mother was in the hospital with a severe pain in the stomach. I was very upset, fearing that she might have cancer. And then, in the night before the doctor was to tell me the results of the tests, I saw a dream. Around an immense white church with domes many people were standing. An old man dressed in white came out of the church with a staff and came across the street straight towards my mother and me. When he came up to me, I recognized him from his photographs. It was Vladika John. He blessed Mother and me, and I immediately woke up. I was no longer upset about Mother. As it turned out, she had an ulcer which quickly healed. I often think now about Vladika."

Sarnia, Ontario, Canada, July 25, 1973 — Tamara Hirt

In the articles which Bishop Savva published in *Orthodox Russia* concerning Archbishop John, there are a number of dreams similar to this one, and Bishop Savva makes a significant observation after describing one: "One may consider this dream as true, because St. Barsanuphius the Great writes that if one sees the cross in a dream, this is a sign that the dream is from God, since satan cannot represent the cross. Of course, other dreams also may be from God, but we do not have such a sure indication that such a dream is from God as we do if we see the sign of the cross in it. And if the dream is from God, one must be careful, says St. Barsanuphius, not to interpret it incorrectly,

for here satan can deceive us" (*Orthodox Russia,* 1967, no. 3). That Vladika John should make the sign of the cross (while blessing) in this dream, and with it give peace of mind, indicates that this dream also was from God, and was Vladika's grace-given visitation to one who venerates him.

2. "I have the pleasure of communicating to you two miracles which occurred through Archbishop John.

"On January 6, 1958, at about 10 a.m., an Orthodox French man and woman, on their way to the Convent at Fourqueux where the Archbishop was going to officiate, were the victims of a very serious automobile accident, and they were taken, the man being unconscious, to the Hospital of St. Germain.

"The man — myself — having been thrown from the automobile by a fortunate chance (the door having opened, while the dashboard had caved in on my seat), had both his knees broken, his ribs crushed, his head and stomach severely bruised. After ten days in the hospital there had been no movement of the bowels, and on the tenth morning he was as one abandoned; everything having been attempted to this end, the basin stood beside him unused.

"In the meantime, a sister from Fourqueux whom the Archbishop had assigned to visit him, brought him a small blessed bread. Out of respect he began to eat this bread... with appetite. A half-hour later his intestines were liberated of their burden; the basin was near, so that everything could be taken care of properly.

"The woman, Madame Pauline Richet, had several fractures in her right arm and leg. After being operated on, she lost much blood, was no longer able to urinate, and was in a comatose state. The second day, towards 1 p.m., Archbishop John paid her a visit. As soon as she saw him, she felt herself illuminated, with the impression that God were approaching her — of which she informed him. He took her hands and held them for a long moment without saying anything. The next morning, on the third day, she urinated, spit out and blew out through the nose clots of blood. She understood that she had been saved. (These are the words of Madame Richet herself, who has just telephoned me. She likewise is happy to express her gratitude to Archbishop John.)

"Archbishop John visited many sick people, but he always did so very humbly and discreetly. His good deeds in this regard remain unknown.

"Some visitors, during a meeting with him when he was in Versailles, saw his head and shoulders surrounded by a blue halo."

Paris, France, June 27, 1973 — Emile Moine

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THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH UNDERGROUND, by William C. Fletcher. Oxford University Press, London, 1971. 314pp.

UNTIL RECENTLY the subject of the "Catacomb" Orthodox Church in the USSR has not been taken seriously in the West, except within a small group of Orthodox believers. In the past few years, however, documents coming to the West from the USSR have testified quite clearly to the continued existence of "illegal" Orthodox groups or, as they are commonly called, "True Orthodox Christians." The present book reveals that even the Western academic world has now come to recognize this.

The book itself is chiefly remarkable for the number of the sources which it cites, chiefly Soviet but also many emigre sources, notably the first-hand testimonies published by Holy Trinity Monastery at Jordanville, N.Y. Its handling of these sources, however, is far from satisfactory, and there are several very fundamental reasons why.

The academic scholarship of today takes as its ideal "objectivity." The author of this book, pursuing this ideal, states that his aim is to make "a contribution to understanding the contemporary phenomena of religion in the USSR" (p. 15)—obviously from the point of view of one who is not *involved* in these phenomena, who stands outside them and observes and speculates about them with indifference to the ultimate questions of truth, of spiritual life and death, which they entail for those who live them. What kind of understanding can such a person have? Obviously very little, and indeed there is much in this book that reminds one of the heterodox dilettantes from the West in the 19th century who visited Russia and gave their often ridiculous "impressions" of the Russian Church. The author is obviously not deeply grounded in Orthodoxy or Church history, which fact leads him to make distinctions, parallels, and emphases which simply do not come naturally from the subject-matter itself, and this makes him helplessly dependent on the Soviet sources with their enormous preconceptions and deliberate distortions. He is quite unable to "read through" these sources to find the reality which very often, for an informed Orthodox believer, shines from behind them.

Thus, the author misunderstands the whole spiritual-ecclesiastical point of the opposition to Metropolitan Sergius' "Declaration" in 1927, which caused the "schism" whose effects this book describes; he blindly follows the Soviet sources in labeling it "political" (p. 64). He sees the leaders of the Catacomb Church through Soviet eyes, which caricature them as calculating figures who cunningly make use of the "convenient imagery of apocalyptic warnings concerning the end of the world" (p. 68), without seeing that every aware Orthodox Christian today thinks in these terms for spiritual reasons. He totally misstates the *context* in which the Catacomb Church arose, seeing it entirely falsely

in the light of sectarianism and the Old Believers (a very superficial view), instead of in the true light of the Orthodox zealot tradition of St. Maximus the Confessor, St. Mark of Ephesus, St. Athanasius of Brest. He takes the Soviet sources at their face value when they artificially divide up the protest movement of 1927 into the "Josephite schism," the "Buevtsy movement," the "schism of Agafangel," the "Viktorianskii schism," the "Varlaamovtsy," and other "sects," with the purpose of concealing the single powerful Orthodox current which, as the surviving documents clearly reveal, inspired all of them alike. Similarly, he takes the word of Soviet sources that the "True Orthodox Church," "True Orthodox Christians," "True Orthodox Christian Wanderers," etc., are all separate sects, each one more Protestant than the last. On this point, however, we have the testimony of an Orthodox believer of integrity within the USSR, Boris Talantov, that even the "True Orthodox Christian Wanderers," who are described by Fletcher as "a somewhat eclectic combination of Orthodox, Old Believer, and sectarian traditions" (p. 244), are in reality perfectly Orthodox, and "their only difference from Orthodox Christians was that they did not recognize Patriarch Alexy and other bishops installed by him, viewing them as traitors to the Church" (see *The Orthodox Word*, 1971, no. 1, p. 37). The author is unable properly to distinguish Orthodox from sectarian phenomena, and he makes quite elementary errors of fact, as when in his ignorance of the traditional Orthodox calendar (which dates the years from the Creation of the world), he fancies this to be a new sectarian invention (p. 244).

Enough has been said to show that the book does not at all fulfill its intention of "understanding" Orthodox religion in the USSR today; and the reason is that it simply *cannot* be understood by a rationalist scholar who is foreign to the whole spirit of Orthodoxy. Purely as history, the book is one-sided and unbalanced, since the author does not know the relative value of the texts he quotes. It is to his credit that he quotes emigre sources, but being outside of the living tradition from which they come, he is unable to evaluate them properly, and to know which of them are of more authority than others; and it is obvious that his sympathies are more with the "scientific" Soviet sources than with the supposedly "subjective" accounts of people who have fled the Soviet Union and have a "vested interest" in believing in the Catacomb Church! Unfortunately, the author's "objective" approach itself makes it impossible for him even to have access to many of the emigre sources, which exist in manuscript and in the memories of the surviving emigres, and which are only revealed in an atmosphere of common faith and mutual trust, which of course do not form part of "objective" scholarship!

All this having been said, however, the book is still of considerable value for the sake of its sources, and an informed Orthodox person can do much to correct the onesidedness of the presentation. Used thus with knowledge, the Soviet sources themselves clearly testify to the continued existence of the Catacomb Church and the martyric courage of its members.